



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Death of Journalist in Kyrgyzstan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 23, 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

In the last four months, there have been several attacks on journalists in Kyrgyzstan. The reprehensible attack in Nookat, Kyrgyzstan, on journalist Almaz Tashiyev, was the latest such incident. According to independent news sources, Mr. Tashiyev sustained grave injuries after being severely beaten by police officers on July 4th. He subsequently died in a hospital on July 12th. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his family.

As the Representative on Freedom of the Media Miklos Haraszti told the Permanent Council on July 2nd, this wave of attacks against journalists is threatening media pluralism in Kyrgyzstan.

We take note that the Kyrgyz authorities have launched an investigation on the assault against Mr. Tashiyev, and they have arrested one police officer and dismissed a police chief for their roles in the crime. We urge that these efforts to bring the attackers to justice continue. We also call on the Kyrgyz authorities to investigate with the same vigor other unresolved cases this year involving journalists, including the June 6th attack on Abduvahab Moniev, a journalist with "Achik Sayosat" in Bishkek.

Madam Chairwoman, journalists and free media are essential to a democratic and open society, and should be able to work without fear or intimidation. The United States reaffirms its commitment to media freedom and calls upon Kyrgyzstan and all OSCE participating States to take appropriate steps to protect media workers, including through a thorough investigation as well as prosecuting those responsible of harming or threatening journalists.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.